

# NEBRASKA

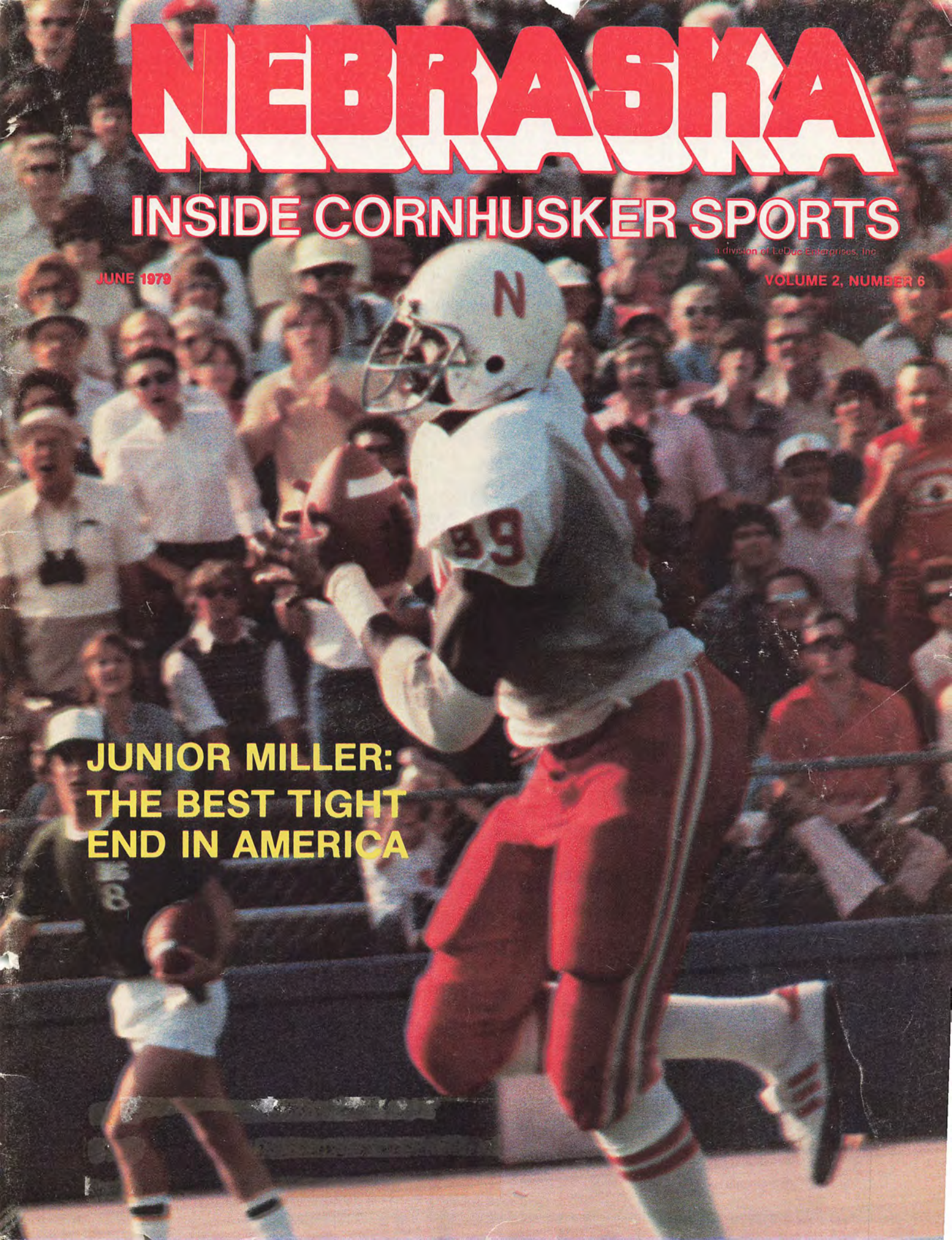
## INSIDE CORNHUSKER SPORTS

a division of LeDuc Enterprises, Inc.

JUNE 1979

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 6

**JUNIOR MILLER:  
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## INSIDE CORNHUSKER SPORTS

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### PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Dear Friends:

It's hard to believe that in a little more than six weeks, fall football practice will open for the Huskers. Summer conditioning and rehabilitation will be evaluated as well as the new crop of incoming freshmen. From that point on, two-a-days, hard hitting, repetition and refinement will fill the lives of the team members as they battle for first-team status in anticipation of the opener against Utah State on September 15.

Immediately after the first game, **NEBRASKA Magazine** moves into weekly production. We'll bring you the great hits, the big scores and all the rest of the color and excitement that is Cornhusker football!

Presently, the staff is gearing up for fall production. We have been planning features and gathering photos for many weeks. During one of our meetings someone said, "But how do we know what kind of information our readers want?" The question stuck with me.

What do *you* want to see in **NEBRASKA Magazine**? If you would take a few minutes and jot down some of your ideas and then mail them to us, we will give all ideas careful consideration.

I have said before that this is *your* magazine. Drop us a line and let us know your thoughts. Football is coming and we're getting ready for a great season.

GO BIG RED!



Thomas R. LeDuc  
Publisher

## LeDuc Enterprises, Inc.

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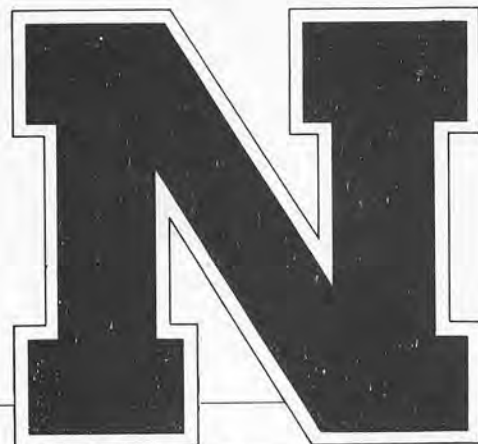


# NEBRASKA

INSIDE CORNHUSKER SPORTS

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# JOE SCHERGER: ONE MORE TIME AROUND

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After two years of being named to the second team All-Big Eight squad, Joe was named to the first team squad for the 1979 season. A batting average of .334 and a school-record for most runs scored (64) were the primary reason for his first team status this year.



by Bill Bennett

Dirt, the substance that makes Nebraska such a great farm state, was one of the major selling points that got Joe Scherger to accept a Husker baseball scholarship in late August of 1976.

Scherger, who as a junior in 1979 was the Cornhusker's most honored player, recalls that August 24—just two days before the start of school—when newly-hired assistant coach John Sanders was showing him the Nebraska campus.

"He picked me and another recruit up at the airport and drove us around campus. He showed us the football stadium, training table, fraternity row and "O" Street. The whole time I was thinking, 'where's the baseball park?' When I asked where the diamond was, Sanders said it was over by the football stadium.

"When we got there, we didn't even know we were looking at a major college field. It was just a backstop. I thought it was an intramural field."

Scherger said he will never forget what Sanders did next.

"He walked to home plate and said he knew that now it didn't look like much. Then he bent down and picked up some dirt and crumbled it. He said this is the best dirt in the world. The same dirt that Nebraska farmers grow corn in. The best dirt to play baseball in. 'Someday,' he said, 'picture AstroTurf, dugouts and a grandstand.' And he was not rambling, either. It was fact by fact.

"It's really something to walk out there now and see that it has all materialized."

From that inauspicious beginning, Scherger, a 6-2, 190-pound outfielder from Billings, Montana, has gone on to three-years of stardom as a Nebraska baseball player. As a freshman in 1977, he hit .364, broke the school record for RBIs with 41 and earned second-team All-Big Eight honors. In 1978, he batted .311, led the Big Eight in homers with nine, and again set marks for runs batted in (52) and hits (55).



Originally from Billings, Montana where he played American Legion ball, Joe now calls Nebraska home nine months a year. The rest of the time he is playing semi-pro baseball in such places as Iowa and Massachusetts.

For the second straight year, he was named to the second team all-league squad.

From the standpoint of awards, though, 1979 was Scherger's most successful. He batted .334 and established a school record for most runs scored (64). He was named first-team All-Big Eight, first team All-Big Eight Tournament, and first-team academic All-Big Eight, with a 2.9 average in physical education.

Scherger has also represented Nebraska baseball throughout the country while playing semi-pro ball. During the summer of 1977, he played for Clarinda, Iowa and last-summer, he played for Cotuit, Massachusetts in the Cape Cod League.

Not bad for a player who never even thought about coming to Nebraska until

one month before the start of the 1976-77 school year. In fact, it's a wonder Scherger even ended up at Nebraska.

Scherger's love of America's pastime was nurtured by Billings' American Legion baseball system—one of the finest Legion organizations in the country. Billings Senior High School does not offer baseball. If you don't think the people of Billings take American Legion ball seriously, consider that two coaches of Scherger's were fired Joe's last two years because the teams didn't win the state tournament.

"When I was going into the ninth grade, the Billings Legion team was like a pro organization. There was one main team, like a major club, then there was a minor

(continued)





After being selected in the 22nd round of this year's major league draft, it appears that Joe will return for his senior year at Nebraska. In the meantime, he is packing his bags to travel with the U.S. team in Japan this summer.

team, like a farm club. The main team was under Eddy Bayne and it never lost a state tournament. But in my junior year, the organization split into two major teams, because of the complaints from Montana's other Legion clubs. It was then the Scarlets and Royals, and I played for the Royals."

Following his sophomore year at Billings in 1974, Scherger's Legion team won the state tournament and advanced to the Northwest Regionals in Klamath Falls, Oregon. It was there that Scherger was viewed for the first time in his career by a scout, Jesse Flores, Jr. of the Minnesota Twins. Scherger was to hear from Flores two years later.

John Sanders first heard of Scherger following his prep junior year, when the Legion team traveled to Denver for some

early-season summer games.

"We started off on an unbeaten streak. I can remember people in the Denver area calling us hicks and rednecks but we really bounced them on the field. In fact, one of our wins was over Tim Carroll's team, who I was to join later at Nebraska. It was on this trip that Mark Johnson, a coach in Boulder, saw me play and gave my name to coach Sanders. At that time Sanders was head coach at Arizona Western. When I got home, there was a letter from him saying Johnson had recommended me for a scholarship."

Scherger first met Sanders at the Billings American Legion Tournament July 4, 1975. "I was in the locker room one night after a game and I was told there was a coach from Arizona outside to see me," he recalls.

"It was coach Sanders. He introduced himself and told me he liked the way I played, liked my attitude and then he wished me luck the rest of the season. He wasn't like the rest of the coaches I had met, he was very sincere. He just didn't have a sales pitch."

But what John Sanders, or any of the other college coaches scouting Scherger, didn't know was that college ball, at that time, was the farthest thing from Scherger's mind. He had his sights on a professional career right after high school.

Scherger was preparing himself both mentally and physically for a pro career, at the beginning of his senior year at Billings and during the summer of 1975. "I started to work on myself as a person," he said. "Physically I was not big enough

to play professional football or basketball. There was an incentive to play pro baseball—to reach a goal that's tough to achieve. I could have played college football, but I thought, then what was left. I would have just filled a spot.

"As a senior, I was homecoming king, captain of the football and basketball teams and the Exchange Club Boy-of-the-Year. I took pride in athletics and scholastics. All this was preparing me for what I thought was a pro career. I figured the

harder I worked and the more knowledge I gained, the more attractive pro prospect I'd be."

Scherger's last year as a prepster was his best athletically. He was a blocking back in football and was recruited by Wyoming and Montana. As a forward in basketball, he had several junior colleges looking at him. But it was a phone call one June day in '76 that was about to fulfill his lifelong dream of playing professional baseball—he thought.

"I picked up the phone and the voice said, 'Congratulations, I'm Jesse Flores, Jr. of the Minnesota Twins and you've been drafted. How do you want your money?' I told him I didn't know. Then we talked about education and a cash bonus and he said that he would fly up the next day."

But almost immediately after he hung up the phone, Scherger was beginning to have doubts about a professional career so early in life.

(continued)

# Mark Ahmann Sports



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"I was 17 years old, anxious, young and impatient. I couldn't have made a rational decision by myself. I consulted with my uncle, who talked to Dave McNally (of Baltimore Oriole fame and from Billings). There was a stipulation in the contract that said I had to use \$8,000 for education in the first two years, or lose it. And McNally pointed out that with all the rookie and instructional leagues, there was a chance I wouldn't have the time to use that money on my education.

"I had to make up my mind in two days. I was forced into a decision and I didn't think it was a very solid contract for a 17-year old. After my choice, I decided on going to a junior college."

Enter Sanders.

Scherger's last year of Billings' Legion competition was his best. He hit .413 for the season to win the Montana state batting title and batted .567 in the tournament. He was also waiting to find out what would happen with his future.

"I was now the property of the Minnesota Twins for six months and no other pro scouts could talk to me. I decided to wait until the last possible moment on my college choice—listen to all the offers and take the best."

"Throughout my senior year, I had spot calls from coach Sanders at Arizona Western. He was honest and sincere, the type of guy I'd like to play for. He had played pro ball and understood my anxieties and needs. I was excited about John Sanders the coach, but not just because he was at Arizona Western."

However, Sanders was not to stay at Arizona Western long. Late in the summer of '76, he accepted the assistant's job at Nebraska, under long-time head coach Tony Sharpe.

"I was playing in Bozeman when I heard that coach Sanders was going to Nebraska. I called him right before he was ready to leave Arizona. He said he wanted to talk to me about Nebraska. He asked me if I'd like to go to Nebraska to get a good thing going. He told me to check on Nebraska, but don't be too concerned about the current facilities, look at the possibilities. He said to check with the people who will be supporting us, ask the Nebraska people."

Little did Scherger know that he didn't have to look far to find rabid Nebraska boosters.

"My Mom works for three doctors. One is Dr. Paul Crellin, whose wife Jane, is from Plainview and a cousin to the Lingefelters. When they heard about me possibly going to Nebraska, their Big Red enthusiasm blew up. That gave me the first sign of what the people were like."

Another avid Cornhusker fan who helped Scherger with his decisions was Billings' jeweler B.H. Higginbotham, whose brother

Ed was a long time tennis coach at NU.

Several days later Scherger left for a recruiting visit to Nebraska and the rest is history. As he sat in Nebraska's South Stadium lounge a few weeks ago before leaving for home, Scherger reflected back on his Husker career and on the upcoming draft. A draft that Scherger hoped would send him to the pro ranks and end his career at Nebraska as a junior.

"I have no regrets about coming to Nebraska but, in a sentimental way I would regret leaving. But maybe it's time for me to go. I definitely want to play pro ball. Sanders told me that if I came and played at Nebraska he would help me grow and with the pros.

"This has been my most enjoyable year at Nebraska. It's been very satisfying playing on AstroTurf, running from the field into dugouts and seeing fans in the stands. It makes me feel better than any home run I ever hit."

Regarding the draft, Scherger felt he was better prepared for this one than the draft of 1976. "Security, what team drafts me, and how much of an interest they show in me are important," he said. "I won't take an insult, not the 36th round. I don't want to play my ticket out to pro ball because I know that I can come back to Nebraska and one of the finest baseball programs in the country."

Two weeks later, after the draft—where Scherger was selected by the New York Mets in the 22nd round—he hinted that 'the dirt' was going to attract him back for another season as a Husker. Not only was he unhappy with his round selection, but he had just been picked for the U.S. team that will tour Japan from June 20th to the middle of July.

"I'm swaying to come back. I can't see what I have to lose if I come back. The offer is not terrible, but the Mets have told me I can't take the tour. I'm going to sit on it for a couple of days, but the more I sit, the less attractive it looks. Anyway, I want to come back and see Nebraska beat Penn State.

"If I go on the tour, I can come back to Lincoln late in the summer and work and earn enough money for an apartment. Then I can work on my hitting all fall and I think I'll have a better season next year."

Scherger, Sanders and the Nebraska program all have something in common. As each matured through experience, the results have kept getting better and better. In 1977, Nebraska was 29-13, then in 1978, the Huskers were 36-20. This last season was Nebraska's most successful ever, as the Cornhuskers were 49-15 overall, finished second in the Big Eight and participated in the NCAA Northeast Regional.

Right now, it looks like all three will be back for an encore in 1980. ★

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# 1979 UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA BASEBALL STATS

## Record: Overall 49-15, Big 8 14-6

### HITTING

Name	G	AB	R	H	AVG	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BB	SO	HP	S	SF	PO	A	E	AVG
Hunter	62	186	52	63	.339	12	5	8	64	6	43	40	2	0	5	49	91	15	.903
Scherger	60	181	64	61	.337	6	4	5	33	15	42	22	6	0	2	99	3	4	.962
O'Brien	63	191	42	61	.325	15	7	6	65	5	40	23	1	2	1	475	27	9	.982
Gebler	64	221	61	70	.317	8	4	4	30	18	32	25	0	3	2	13	1	1	.933
Primante	63	148	44	45	.304	11	0	7	44	6	65	34	0	1	5	354	28	8	.979
S. Haas	56	150	28	42	.280	6	3	2	26	5	13	19	3	2	5	63	6	3	.958
Schafer	56	147	23	41	.279	4	1	0	23	6	15	16	2	4	1	64	120	13	.934
Oakley	57	162	36	45	.278	13	2	2	29	5	35	22	0	2	1	63	8	6	.922
M. Haas	27	40	6	11	.275	0	0	1	9	2	5	10	0	0	0	50	4	2	.964
Combs	33	59	11	16	.271	2	0	0	6	4	6	9	1	0	0	15	46	12	.836
Russo	61	215	57	56	.260	10	3	1	33	25	35	29	3	0	2	100	142	15	.942
Bright	36	66	7	16	.242	2	1	0	11	4	6	18	0	0	3	15	0	1	.938
Other	11	17	4	2	.118	0	0	0	2	1	3	4	0	0	0	9	1	0	1.000
TOTALS	64	1783	435	530	.297	89	30	36	375	102	340	271	18	14	27	1381	572	99	.952
OPP. TOTALS	64	1693	217	385	.227	66	14	12	182	44	258	399	16	22	12	1314	547	130	.935

NU Overall is 50-16, beating (5-4) and losing (3-2) to Tokai-Japan at the Hawaii Rainbow Master Tournament.  
 2nd place in Big 8 East; Finished 2nd behind champ Oklahoma at Big 8 Baseball Championships, 16-19, Oklahoma City, Okla.  
 NU finished 3rd at NCAA Northeast Regional, May 26-28, Annapolis, MD.

### PITCHING

Player	G	GS	CG	IP	H	R	ER	ERA	BB	HEP	SO	WP	W	L	BK
O'Brien	1	0	0	3	1	2	0	0.00	3	0	1	0	0	0	0
Faust	11	7	3	49.2	39	17	11	1.99	28	1	53	2	6	1	1
Burke	13	12	4	69.1	53	32	19	2.47	35	4	78	4	7	3	0
Costello	12	6	5	50.2	50	17	14	2.49	16	0	32	1	5	0	1
Vojtesak	7	5	3	28.2	17	11	9	2.83	21	1	43	0	4	0	0
Harlander	10	5	2	39.1	28	18	13	2.97	25	1	36	3	5	2	1
Tromba	14	11	3	69.1	57	36	28	3.63	36	3	33	6	6	4	0
McManus	11	10	2	52	49	27	21	3.63	30	3	39	3	4	1	0
Nolting	27	0	0	46.2	41	23	20	3.86	23	3	44	3	6	1	0
Pettit	11	8	4	51.2	50	34	25	4.35	41	0	35	3	6	3	1
TOTALS	64	64	26	460.1	385	217	160	3.13	258	16	399	25	49	15	4
OPP. TOTALS	64	64	23	438	530	435	335	6.88	340	18	271	43	15	49	4

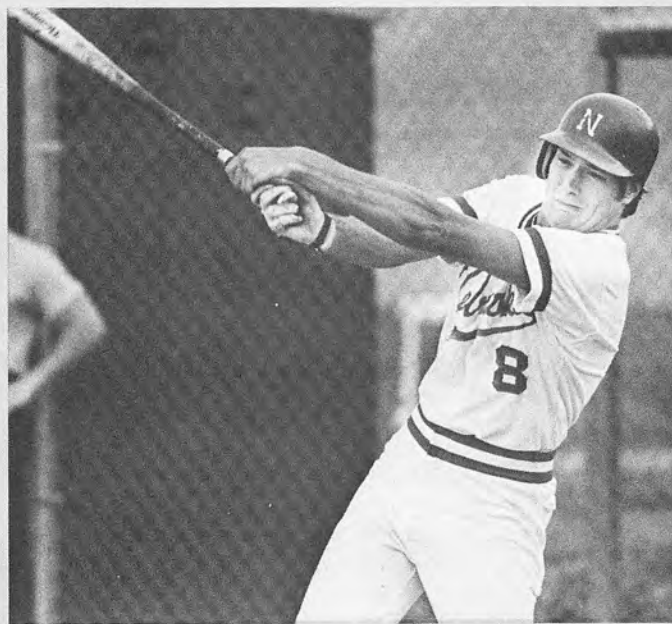
NU Saves: Nolting, 4

Left on Base: NU 427 / OPP 429

Double Plays: NU 40 / OPP 39



Mike Harlander



Jeff Hunter



# The Life and Times of "Wild" Railsback

by Mike Babcock

A scar runs from just above his left eye, across his forehead and into the scalp. Dick Railsback says it's there, but you have to look closely to see evidence of the gash. Forty stitches produced the scar, but one doctor did a good job of hiding it. Now that particular remnant of Railsback's pole vaulting career is invisible to most people.

By his own admission, Railsback was a "wild" pole vaulter. His technique often left something to be desired, but like every other vaulter in the late 60's, Railsback wanted to be the first to clear 18 feet, and he was willing to try anything if he thought it might hurl him higher off the ground.

"Someone could have handed me a nitrogen bomb, and if I thought I could go higher, I would have tried it," Nebraska's first-year assistant track coach said.

Once, someone handed him an experimental pole, composed of a carbon material to allow for more flex. It had a tremendous bend, but the first time Railsback tried to vault with it, the pole exploded, and he was left standing near the pit.

All that remained in his hands — one of which was broken by the explosion — was the portion of the pole wrapped in tape. The rest of it had shattered into a million pieces, none of them larger than a dime. The only thing missing from the scene was a label which read "Acme Pole Company."

Wile E. Coyote could have emphathized with Railsback. "I shook for two days afterward," he said.

Railsback wasn't always just a pole vaulter. At Pasadena, California, City College he ran the 100-yard dash, the 220- and 330-yard intermediate hurdles, competed in the long jump as well as the pole vault, and ran on two relay teams, one of which set a national JC record.

He might have become a decathlete — "I would have loved to," he said — were it not for the fact that Greece's Cstos Papanicolau had yet to become the first pole vaulter ever to clear 18 feet. The 18-foot barrier was an obsession for young vaulters and no one wanted to be "dinking around" with another event while someone else might be clearing the magic height.

"We were going for 18 feet every meet," Railsback said. "It was ridiculous. We showed total disdain for the world record

(17-9 at the time). We never went up to 17-10; it was always 18 feet. Everyone wanted to be the first.

He can remember landing in the pit one day after an attempt at the barrier and thinking he had made it. "I jumped up screaming and yelling, waving my arms, and I was hit in the head by the crossbar," he said. "I couldn't believe it had fallen."

That from a young man whose best pole vault effort in high school was 13-6. He didn't top 16 feet until he was in junior college.

Railsback never cleared 18 feet, but in the 1969 season — during which he competed in 84 meets — he cleared 17-8¾, the best in the world that year and only ¼-inch off the world record at that time.

Railsback was fast enough to run 100 yards in :09.4 and strong enough to bench press 400 pounds as a college student at UCLA and an AAU track competitor with the U.S. National Team from 1966-71.

The strength came in handy when he had to recover from injuries, but "I spent so much time in the weight room for so little gain," he said of the pole vaulting value gained from his constant weight lifting.

At the time, athletes regarded strength and speed as the major factors in pole vaulting success. Few considered gymnastics as good preparation for vaulting, and hardly anyone had begun to tap the mysteries of the fiberglass pole as a means of catapulting human beings into the stratosphere.

The new poles had destructive powers as well, and Railsback quickly learned them. Twice in one year he broke his back by landing on the concrete runway and the board approach.

Once his left hand slipped off the pole at full bend, just as it began to straighten. The pole whipped back into his face. Railsback was knocked senseless, and he stopped breathing. Artificial respiration and those 40 stitches put him back together.

"Psychologically, that was the worst injury I ever suffered," said Railsback. "After it happened, every time I'd start to take off, I'd see the pole and just stop. It took me five weeks to get back up to 16 feet.

"I should have been a boxer, I could sure take the punishment," he said.

Railsback spent the 1968 season as a red-shirt because of his injuries, but he recovered in time to compete at the Olympic Trials in Lake Tahoe. Bob Seagren, the eventual Olympic gold medalist, won the competition. Railsback vaulted 17 feet, as did John Pennell and Casey Carrigan, but finished fourth on misses.

Three qualified for the Olympic Games in Mexico City that day. "It was the first time Carrigan ever cleared 17 feet," said Railsback, who had made it for the 28th time.

He tried to qualify for the Olympics again in 1972, but by then, Railsback was bothered by leg problems and cramping which could be traced to his twice-broken back. He had a good day in the preliminary competition, but without a day to recuperate before the finals, Railsback couldn't compete at full strength.

In 1973 he had back surgery to repair damage which previously had been handled with rest and a corset. Dick Railsback, competitor, became Dick Railsback, teacher and coach. He now holds a Master of Science degree in kinesiology from UCLA.

Prior to becoming an assistant to Nebraska's veteran track and field coach Frank Seigne, Railsback had been coach of the Saudi Arabian national team since 1975.

Bill Toomey, who won a gold medal in the decathlon at the 1968 Olympic Games, suggested he apply for the position under a program established by the Whitaker Corporation, a Los Angeles-based conglomerate which, among many other things, is the world's largest maker of pleasure boats.

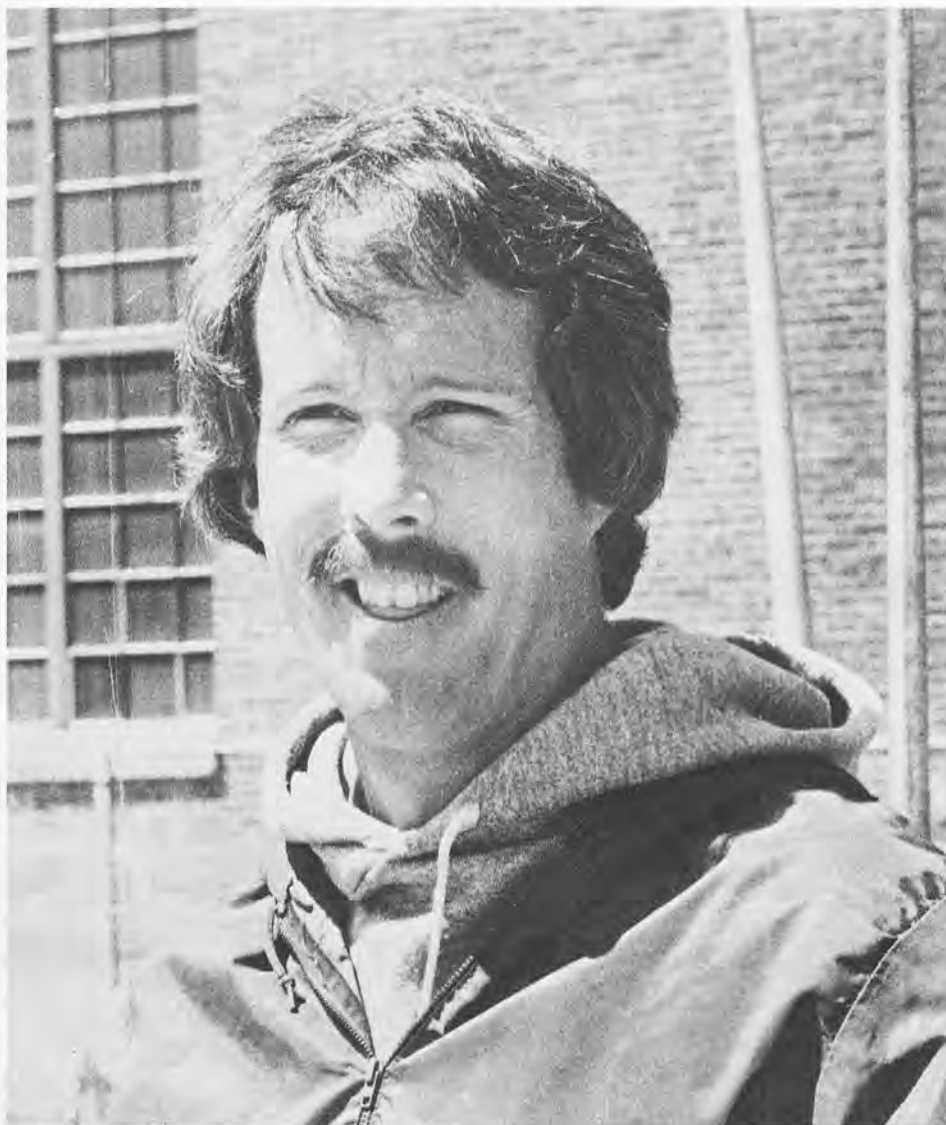
The corporation had contracted to build, staff and administer hospitals in Saudi Arabia, and Dr. Tom Waddell, who finished sixth in the decathlon at the Mexico City Olympics, suggested it also consider administering a Saudi athletic program.

"Nobody had ever hired a company to  
(continued)

**In his college days Railsback sought out the elusive 18-foot mark in the pole vault. "We were going for 18 feet every meet," Railsback said. "We showed total disdain for the world record ... everyone wanted to be first (to clear 18 feet)."**







Today Dick leaves vaulting to the younger Huskers, though he still has an occasional urge to take a trip down the runway. On one such unscheduled trip he cleared 16-6.

set up an athletic program," Railsback said. He was in a "rut and needed to break out," so he looked at the opportunity as a means of promotion from his assistant's job at Valley Community College in Sherman

Oaks, California.

In 1976, Railsback's Saudi track and field team journeyed to the Montreal Olympics, primarily to watch. His memories of coaching there are not always fond though

he added Arabic to English and Swedish as the languages he speaks.

He classifies the Middle Eastern experience with his multiple injuries. "Between the two things, I don't know how many years I've wiped out," he said.

Coaching the Saudis was like being in the infantry. It's best looked at in retrospect; the value is all after-the-fact, a nice thing to have done . . . past tense.

"If someone offered me \$80,000 to be a consultant there for one week, I'd think about it two seconds and turn them down," said Railsback, smiling.

Railsback still looks in condition to pole vault. Although he's 15 pounds over his optimum competitor's weight of 170, he can bench press 340 pounds and last year, without preparation, he cleared 16-6. He says he could probably achieve his 18-foot goal now, if he didn't have more important things to consider — like his wife Annika, who comes from Sweden, their home, and his coaching and recruiting responsibilities.

"I know I could make 18-0, but that wouldn't do anything these days," he said. The magic height has become 19-0.

Railsback wears a small, gold, four-leaf clover on a chain around his neck. It was given to Annika's parents when she was born, and Annika gave it to Dick when they were engaged in 1969. It's given him good luck . . . no more broken hands or back, no 40-stitches in the face.

Dick Railsback will never forget lying on the operating table to be sewed up that day. The doctor remarked that the sheets on the bed wouldn't need to be changed because only Railsback's head and heels were touching it. His back was arched in pain.

Since then, he's had a dislike for hospital beds. "I hate waking up in a hospital and not knowing how I got there," he said.

A scar runs up Railsback's forehead, an invisible testimony to his career as a world-class, but "wild," pole vaulter. ★

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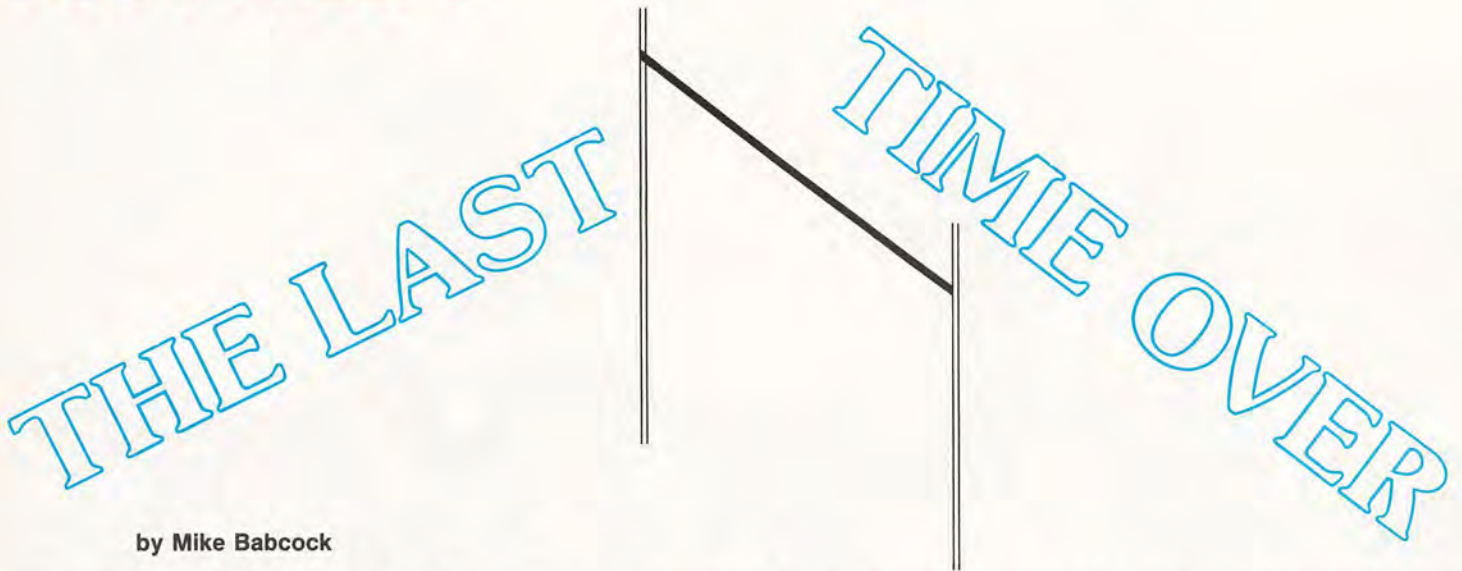
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# DOUG PHELPS



by Mike Babcock

It all came down to the heel of a left shoe, one designed specifically for high jumpers. The shoe was new; Doug Phelps was using it for only the third time.

Phelps wore the shoe when he cleared 7-1½, his career best, to finish second at the Big Eight outdoor track meet in Lincoln, May 19, and qualify for the NCAA Track and Field Championships in Champaign, Illinois. The heel had pulled loose even then, and he had to wrap tape around the shoe to hold its heel in place.

One spike was missing from the front of the shoe, belying its newness. It looked old and worn.

Phelps slipped just before he attempted his final jump at 7-2½ that day in Lincoln. You could hear the rasp as his shoe scraped across the artificial surface which forms the semi-circle in front of the high-jump pit at Ed Weir Stadium. "I was psyched up and ready to jump; I just wish I could have gotten to (jump) on my third attempt," he said.

Nebraska's best-ever high-jumper never had a chance to clear the bar on that third try. He barely got off the ground, slicing between the standards in the unavoidable frustration which results from a poor plant.

But he wasn't disappointed even though it meant finishing second to Missouri's Nat Page, who couldn't jump any higher but who had fewer misses at the previous height — 7-1½, the NCAA qualifying standard.

Page won the conference indoor title in Oklahoma City by jumping 7-2; Phelps was second at 7-1.

In their outdoor rematch before an NU home crowd, Phelps was ahead on fewer total misses and Doug thought he would win his second straight Big Eight title. He didn't find out differently until Page had missed a third time at 7-2½, and he was pre-

paring for his final jump. Even so, Phelps was satisfied. "I made what I was shooting for," he said.

The first-year med-school student from Hastings wanted a repeat chance to compete in the national meet, something which had frustrated him as a junior when he had been both the conference indoor and outdoor champion.

Last year, in NCAA competition at Eugene, Oregon, Phelps failed to make the opening height — 6-11 — and he wanted another opportunity before his eligibility ran out.

Before leaving for Champaign and the 1979 NCAA championships, Phelps glued the heel to his shoe. It held tight through the qualifications. He jumped twice that first day, clearing 6-11 and 7-0¼ on successive attempts to advance from a field of 29 into a final group of 15. Phelps felt good. His shoe repair had worked.

Two days later, on Saturday, June 3 — the final day of NCAA competition — Doug Phelps pulled on those shoes for what would be his final time as a Cornhusker.

He sat on the infield of Memorial Stadium at the University of Illinois with Iowa State's Steve Kuehl, a friend, and watched the final competitors. Minutes before, Phelps and Kuehl both held hopes of finishing among the top six collegiate high jumpers in the country.

Phelps missed clearing 7-2¼ by what seemed to be a shoe lace on his first attempt, which would have earned him fourth place. Invisible fingers — or an errant shoe lace — flicked the bar off after it appeared he had broken his own school record.

His final two attempts at 7-2¼ didn't come as close as that first effort. At 7-0 and again at 7-1, Phelps recovered after two misses to achieve success and ad-

vance to the next height. The third attempt at 7-2¼ "just didn't click like the other two," he said.

The glue and tape on his shoe had abdicated their responsibility when he cleared 7-1 in a light rain.

Most high jumpers start their approach 16 feet from the bar; Phelps begins three feet closer. He swings his arms, rocks back and makes a sharp turn during his run, so "I have a twisting action when I take off," he said.

The heel pulled loose again, and prior to his final attempt at 7-2¼, Phelps was forced to change shoes. The replacements were old and a half-size too large. He wasn't used to wearing them, but they didn't provide him an excuse. "I should have made it," he said.

But Phelps began his jump too far out from the bar and dropped down onto it; his collegiate eligibility ended on a miss, just as all high-jumping careers inevitably do. Phelps said he might compete next season unattached, but the demands of his physical therapy curriculum at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha are likely to preclude most serious competition.

What began for him in the first grade ended 17 years later after Phelps had become the best high jumper ever to pull on Husker colors.

He and Kuehl, who also missed at 7-2¼, shared the same emotions as they sat in Memorial Stadium under overcast skies

(continued on page 18)

Because of the rigors of his physical therapy major and the fact that he attends classes at the medical center in Omaha, Doug has had little time to really work and refine his high jumping. In spite of these setbacks, he placed second in the Big Eight and 14th at the NCAA. Ted Kirk photo







(continued from page 16)

and watched Nat Page become the NCAA outdoor high jump champion with a 7-4½ effort.

Franklin Jacobs, the defending collegiate champion from Fairleigh-Dickinson, passed at 7-2¼ after making 7-1 on his third attempt. Jacobs missed three times at the next height — 7-3 — and officially finished behind Phelps.

"I was disappointed, but I was also satisfied," Phelps said of his NCAA performance. It was the seventh straight meet in which he had cleared 7-0 or higher, and he accepted it as an appropriate conclusion to a sterling career. "I wanted to qualify for the finals and I did that," he said.

But his feelings as he sat there couldn't be measured in meters or feet and inches. Not getting the opportunity to mount the awards stand didn't weigh heavily on his mind as he considered what he had just finished.

Something more important occupied his thoughts as he watched Page win what he may have dreamed about but perhaps not seriously expected. Doug Phelps wasn't worried about the 1980 Olympic Games or first-place finishes on the day his NU career finally ended.

"The saddest part is, it's hard to see all those guys you've competed against for so long and know you'll keep in touch with them but you won't ever compete with them again," he said.

Steve Kuehl sat next to Phelps, thinking about the same things. After his third miss at the Big Eight Outdoor, Kuehl had given his support to Phelps — after each attempt, Kuehl, NU assistant coach Dick Railsback, former Nebraska high-jumper Dean Herzog, and Oklahoma's Greg Seay conferred with Phelps.

Part of what had solidified that bond of friendship was ended, and Phelps' thoughts returned to pressing matters, like the child he and his wife, Diane, are expecting in October. Diane is newly-graduated from Nebraska's School of Medical Technology, and Doug is maintaining a B-plus grade-point average in his physical therapy classes at the Nebraska Medical School.

Such concerns nearly kept Phelps from competing this season. He considered applying for a red-shirt season and waiting until next year to finish his collegiate eligibility. With his classwork centered in Omaha and no time to practice, Phelps didn't want to use up a scholarship which might help some other Cornhusker track athlete.

But when it became apparent his career goal might take him farther from Lincoln next season, he decided to compete unattached at an indoor meet hosted by Doane College.

"I had my fingers crossed for 6-8, but I



**In the Big Eight meet Doug was defeated by Nat Page of Missouri. The Mizzou Tiger went on to place first in the NCAA.** Ted Kirk photo

expected something more like 6-4 or 6-6," Phelps said. After 17 years of high-jumping, he has his approach and technique down; he cleared 6-10.

That height has always been a barrier for Phelps, who was Nebraska's 1975 Prep Athlete-of-the-Year at Hastings High School. He was the first Nebraska prep ever to clear 7-0, but for him, 6-10 was the biggest challenge, just like 5-10 was when

he was in junior high.

On the Tuesday before the Big Eight meet, Phelps came to Lincoln to practice. His coaches, Railsback and Frank Sevigne, didn't know he had come to jump, and his audience was small. Five people, among them former roommate Rod Horn, showed up to watch him clear 6-10, the old nemesis which he had never achieved at the pit in Ed Weir Stadium.





Coach Dick Railsback said after Phelps' final jump at the NCAA that he wished he could have had more time with Doug. Railsback thinks that with regular practice and attention to minute detail Doug could have possibly won the NCAA. Ted Kirk photo

"I hadn't jumped 6-7 here before," he said, smiling. "My confidence was really built up."

Herzog, a former teammate and one of only three Cornhuskers ever to clear 7-0 (sophomore Larry Meyer is the third), showed up to help. "Dean knows what I'm doing wrong," said Phelps.

Only 6-0 and 161 pounds, Doug's first love was basketball — it still is — and he

considered places like Hastings College and Kearney State before settling on Nebraska and a track career.

This season, basketball — of the pick-up game variety in the Med Center gym, eight blocks from his duplex in Omaha — and one night a week of coed volleyball with Diane, were the sum total of Phelps' workouts for most of his meets. His class work consumed eight hours a day, and he

only high-jumped in competition. Rarely could he get to Lincoln for practice.

During the indoor season he attended three formal practices with his Cornhusker teammates. Outdoors, he came to Lincoln once, that the week prior to the Big Eight Championships.

But he refused to make such a formless training schedule an excuse when he failed, and his failures were so few no excuses were necessary. Phelps proved once and for all he's a competitor. He did what needed to be done, and his NU teammates dubbed him "Iceman-of-the-Year" for his ability to compete under pressure.

By season's end, he was willing to argue that lack of an intense practice schedule might have helped him more than it hurt.

"Instead of thinking about it a whole week, I have to wait until the night before I compete," said Phelps. "When you practice every day, you have to worry about the weekend; that might be added pressure, and maybe I'm a lot looser."

"I enjoyed it before, but the tension was greater when I practiced every day. Without that pressure, the high jump is even more fun. It's my time to relax while everybody else has had time to get tight and nervous. Being away may have made me appreciate it more," he said.

The slender red-head from Hastings will always remain in the Nebraska track and field record book as the first Cornhusker ever to clear 7-0 outdoors — in 1978, he and Herzog both cleared 7-0 indoors. And for the time being, Doug Phelps stands alone as the NU school record holder at 7-1½.

At the Big Eight meet, Phelps equaled his NU record on his third attempt. After studying the bar for the allotted two minutes between jumps, Phelps swung his arms, rocked back, moved toward the bar from 13 feet away, and made his sharp turn, putting pressure on the tape that held together the left heel of his shoe. The best high jumper in Nebraska history went up, tipped the bar, and dropped into the pit to the cheers of a partisan NU crowd.

"I hit it pretty good; I got a break there," he said.

Phelps was happy with what he had accomplished, just as he would be happy two weeks later at the NCAA championships. To everyone but him, it all came down to the heel of a shoe that had to be glued and wrapped with tape.

To Phelps it was a matter of competing with friends like Steve Kuehl for what probably would be the last time. Said Phelps of his friend and opponent of four seasons: "He must have had a lot of the same emotions."

Doug Phelps' Nebraska track career had ended; another career, a lifelong one in physical therapy, was just beginning. ★











# Just A Matter Of Desire

by Randy York

If Nebraska receiver coach Gene Huey and strength coach Boyd Epley fairly salivate at what Junior Miller could do if he got mean or if he lifted weights, it's only because both know what Nebraska's All-Big Eight tight end can do now.

Miller, an Associated Press third team All-America last season, might have been the country's best tight end in 1978.

At least Nebraska coaches and many pro scouts thought he was.

Missouri's Kellen Winslow was the first tight end to go in the NFL draft and if Junior had been a senior, many thought that honor would have been his.

No wonder Huey and Epley get excited about Miller's prospects for 1979.

If the Huskers' 6-5, 238-pound Incredible Hulk with :04.6 speed in the 40 can catch 30 passes for 560 yards and five touchdowns without being mean or at his physical peak, what can he do nine months later when he is meaner . . . and stronger?

"I'd like to see us get the ball more to Junior this year," admits Huey, who replaced Jerry Moore as receiver coach when Moore left Nebraska last winter to become head coach at North Texas State.

"I'd also like to see Junior use his size and strength to be more physical with defensive backs," Huey says. "It all sort of depends on his mood. If he feels like running over somebody, it'll take two or three to tackle him. But if he's out there footloose and fancy free, it might just take one guy to bring him down . . . with a wrist.

"I know he can be physical because he's one of the best blockers I've ever seen at tight end. A guy with his size and speed lowering the boom is bound to put some question marks in somebody's mind about tackling him head-on.

"Doing that in traffic will give him more opportunities to break more tackles to score more often."

Huey is confident that whoever emerges as Nebraska's quarterback starter this fall will find Miller a bigger, better, meaner and stronger receiving target.

Epley, perhaps the nation's foremost authority on athletic strength training, is hoping to do his part for Miller's success.

"He's an amazing physical specimen without lifting weights," Epley admits. "He has such a natural physique, he's never really done any serious lifting. But I'm convinced some work this summer can really pay off for him next fall."

Epley, as much as anyone, should know the difference between a very good college football player and a great player.

Epley's sophisticated evaluation of talent drew attention in the recent pro draft. Six members of his 1978 All-America Strength Team, including Cornhuskers George Andrews and Kelvin Clark, were among the first 22 players chosen in the draft.

Epley's assessment of Miller's potential in future listings?

"Unlimited," he replies. "Junior Miller is not only inescapable first-round NFL draft material, some pro scouts have already indicated he might be the country's best player this fall and the No. 1 choice in the entire draft."

Such heady stuff makes Nebraska coach Tom Osborne and Huey understandably uneasy.

Miller still must improve to reach the point everyone expects . . . and he must avoid injury, something (knock on wood) he has been able to do with complete success so far.

"Junior Miller is a great athlete and a hard worker with a great attitude," Huey says. "I suppose there are some days where he might feel like letting up, but he won't. He knows there's too much at stake and too many people counting on him."

If summer weight training packed into a tight schedule of classes and work produces results like Epley hopes it will, Miller could inflict damage every game like he did last fall against Kansas State.

Against the Wildcats, Miller snagged five passes for 124 yards and a touchdown. Afterwards, Kansas State coach Jim Dickey quipped that Miller "might get a letter from the humane society."

Bob Hentzen, sports editor of the *Topeka (Kansas) Capital-Journal* once observed that Miller "is just biding his time at Nebraska . . . waiting for the pros."

"Pro football has always been a goal of mine," Miller admits. "Billy Joe DuPree (tight end for the Dallas Cowboys) has been my idol since high school. He's big and tall and can catch and block. I even wear Number 89, the same as he does. If I have a good senior season and get drafted, I couldn't think of a bigger thrill than getting drafted by the Cowboys and taking his job away from him."

A return to Texas, his homestate, is strictly a dream. Nebraska recruited him out of Midland, Texas, much to the chagrin of a parade of major colleges which wanted Junior's basketball talents as much as, if not more than, his football skills.

Miller captained his high school basketball team three straight years. His team finished third in the state as a junior. It led to first-team All-State honors for Miller.

(continued on page 24)

### BIG RED GALLERY

Junior Miller is the best tight end in America according to many professional scouts. He has the size, strength and speed to possibly be the number one pick in next year's pro draft. This year he hopes to use his skills to bring Nebraska a national championship.

Mike Hievyack photo.

Right: Junior's tremendous size and strength make defensive backs wary of taking him head on in the open field.







"I didn't start playing football again until my junior year in high school," Miller remembers. "I got most of my publicity and most of my college scholarship offers for basketball. My high school basketball coach talked me out of going out for football my sophomore year because he thought my future was in basketball."

Remarkably, Junior almost quit halfway through that junior football season.

"They had me at defensive end and I wasn't getting into many of the games," he explains. "It wasn't much fun being on a football team when you didn't get to play."

An injury to one of Midland's first string defensive ends gave Junior his golden opportunity against Odessa.

"They were our big rivals 20 miles away," he says. "They figured since I was a rookie they'd run around my end all night."

Daryl Hunt, who had a sterling career at Oklahoma as a linebacker, was Odessa's tight end assigned to blocking Miller that night.

But he didn't get much accomplished. Junior's debut as a varsity starter resulted in an amazing 31 tackles!

Miller, obviously, started the last four games that season and wound up making the all-conference team.

Suddenly, a tremendous athlete excelling in two sports knew a decision was inevitable.

"Football became my favorite sport," he says, "but I didn't take many recruiting trips that winter because I was busy playing basketball."

Miller said he took only three recruiting trips out of the dozens that were offered.

He visited Kentucky, where his prep basketball coach wanted him to go. He visited Texas Tech and he visited Nebraska.

"I wanted to go to a school outside of Texas and I wanted to go to a national power," he says. "Coach Moore recruited me. He had played for my high school coach. I like coach Moore. I liked all the coaches at Nebraska. That's why I came to Lincoln."

Even though Junior has never regretted his decision, he concedes there was a time when the road was bumpy and filled with chuckholes.

"I almost quit and went home a couple of times my freshman year," he recalls. "I got discouraged my sophomore year, too, when I had to play behind two people (Ken Spaeth and Mark DuFresne). I thought I was as good as they were, but they were

playing and I wasn't."

Junior finally realized there was a reason for his sideline status.

"I was making too many mistakes," he admits. "Coach Huey knew I had the ability, but he also knew I had to learn how to do things right. He'd always correct me and sometimes I wouldn't even want to go to practice."

Miller would get so mad, he'd go out at night to walk off his frustration. He didn't think the mistakes he was making were that serious. Now he knows they are the difference between winning and losing football.

"I'm glad coach Moore stayed on my back," he says now. "I'm a better player for it."

As much as he accomplished last season and as eager as he is to play pro football, Junior Miller is still a team player and the ache of missing a national championship is still there.

"I really got upset with the Missouri game last year," he says. "We had everything in the bag and let it all drop out. That game is still a nightmare and the only way we're going to get rid of it is to come back this year and win the national championship."

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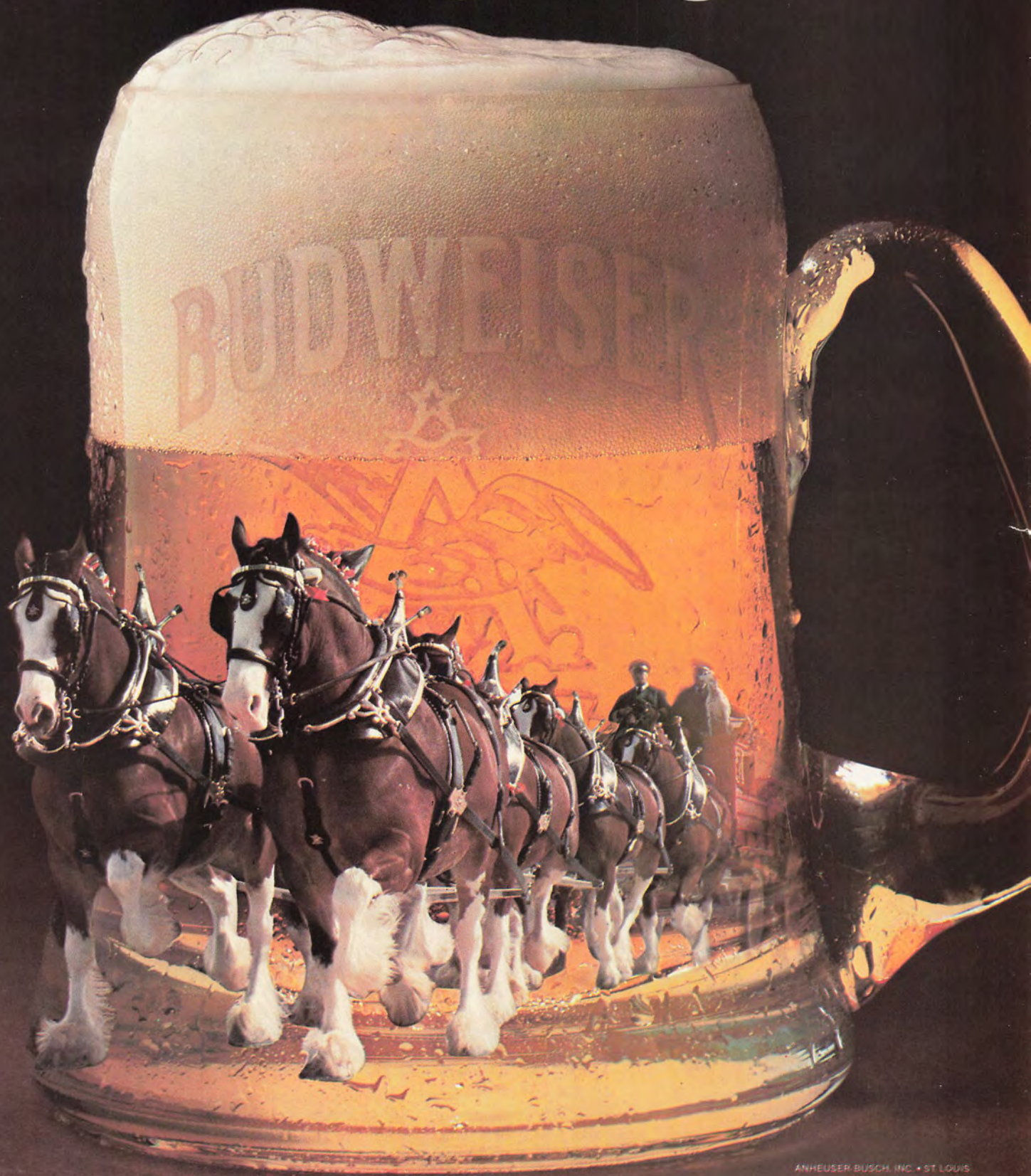
One of Junior's greatest assets is his ability to run with the ball after catching the pass. With his strength and size, few defensive backs are capable of handling Junior one-on-one.

Ted Kirk photo





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Against Kansas State last season Junior had a premier day as he caught five passes for 124 yards. Without doubt, Miller may be the best tight end to come out of the Big Eight in many years.

Mike Hlevyack photo

(continued on page 24)

That will take work, extra sacrifice, and more dedication.

Junior Miller may be milking all the pre-season publicity in the world, but he still has to convert the promise into performance this fall. His production is vital to Nebraska's success in '79.

Admitting he gets out of lifting weights whenever he can, Junior is showing up more this summer. He feels an obligation.

"I don't want to do a lot of it," he says, "because I think it can tighten you up too much and keep you from being as agile as you need to be."

He works out elsewhere to make up the difference.

This summer, Junior's been riding his bike with regularity. He also climbs hills, walks, jogs, plays tennis . . . and he plays a lot of basketball.

His skills on the court were still good enough last winter to lead a team coached by Nebraska defensive end L.C. Cole to the university intramural championship.

It was a good way to keep in shape and offset the monotony of winter conditioning.

Miller went into spring as hungry as a sophomore wanting to make the varsity.

"He wasn't complacent about what he had done and I liked that as much as anything this spring," Huey says. "Junior came into every practice feeling he had to show us. He had a great spring. I hope he has a great fall."

Miller is the first to admit that there are question marks about Nebraska's ability to field an offensive team equal to the one which led the nation in total offense last year.

"We'll have a new quarterback and we'll have some new linemen," he says, "but I think we'll be just as good. We have almost all our skilled poeple back. We should be able to do a lot of things with a lot of people."

"Look at our backs — I.M. Hipp, Andra Franklin, Craig Johnson, Tim Wurth, Jarvis Redwine. People won't be able to key on me as a receiver either. Not when we have people like Tim Smith at split end and Kenny Brown at wingback."

Nebraska's defense, Junior says, will be much better than it was in '78 and "that gives our offense some confidence, too. Last year, I think our number one offense scored one touchdown the whole spring against the number one defense. No one was expecting us to do much and we ended

up leading the nation last year.

"This spring," Miller says, "we showed we can have another great offensive football team if we all work hard enough. I know I'm going to have to work as much as anyone because everyone is counting on me."

Even now, Junior Miller finds it fascinating to talk about All-America status, national championships and pro contracts.

"I guess I've come a long way since playing backyard football with my cousins," Junior says. "There were enough of us to play our own family games. Then, when I was in the sixth grade, I played midget football for one year. They supplied the helmet, the shoulder pads and the jersey."

But each player had to furnish his own pants and shoes.

"We were so poor," Junior remembers, "that we couldn't afford either . . . so I played in shorts and tennis shoes."

If Junior Miller is meaner and stronger and lives up to everyone's great expectations this fall, he'll never have to worry again about shoes and pants.

He may even sign a big enough pro contract to buy several sporting goods stores. ★





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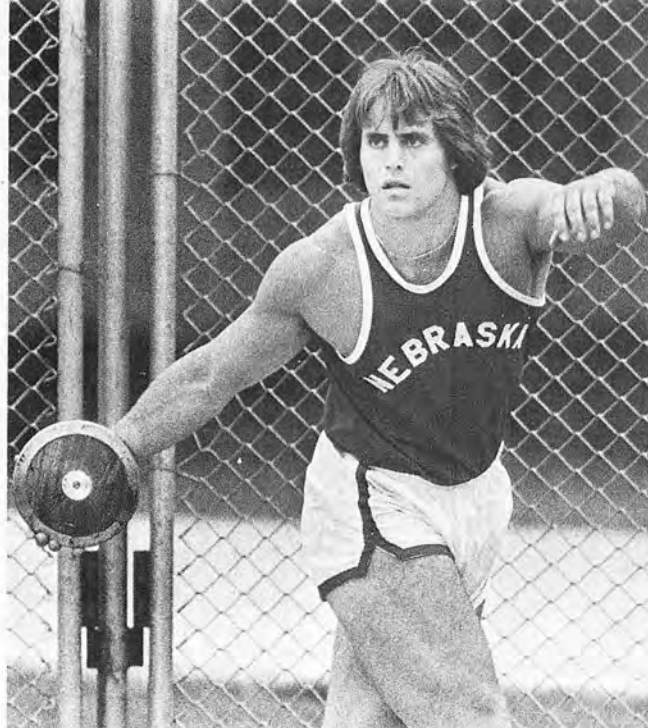
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## STOP ACTION

Expectations were high as the men hosted the Big Eight championships May 18-19. However, team performance didn't match those expectations and Husker hopes of upsetting perennial powerhouse Kansas faded as the meet wore on. It was a meet filled with surprise and disappointment as reigning champions were dethroned while unheralded tracksters moved to the top of the victory stand. Mark Fluitt (left) shows great relief after winning the 1500 meters with a Big Eight record time of 3:45.33 —

he would be the Husker's only first-place finisher. Lee Kunz (above left) was dethroned in the discus and placed second with a throw of 175-5. Anthony Coleman (above right) of Kansas takes command in the 110-meter high hurdles much to the disappointment of Husker Randy Brooks who finished sixth. Perhaps the biggest frustration of the meet was experienced by Scott Poehling (below) who saw his hopes of another 800-meter title fade when he finished fourth in a time of 1:47.35. Ted Kirk photos





# TROUBADOUR FINDS HOME IN LINCOLN

by Mike Babcock

*"Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and sorry I could not travel both and be one traveler, long I stood, and looked down one as far as I could to where it bent in the undergrowth." (Robert Frost)*

Terry Pettit found his first teaching job by hopping in his Volkswagen at Bristol, Virginia, and taking a 10-day drive along interstate highways, stopping at each college he passed to ask if there were any teaching vacancies for an out-of-work poet-journalist.

Just off Highway 401, in Louisburg, North Carolina, Pettit found a junior college and the job he accepted. He was offered two others in those 10 days.

Pettit got an assignment teaching creative writing by saying he could coach the boys' golf and tennis teams. The Louisburg College Dean, indifferent to his application at first, finally offered him the chance to become a teacher if he would agree to be a coach.

Teachers were a dime a dozen, more abundant than rest stops along the interstate, but the Dean needed a good coach, so Pettit became one . . . on the spot.

His first love was teaching, but since such opportunities were scarce in 1974, he decided to be whatever he needed to be in order to teach. Pettit was willing to assume any identity if it also meant becoming a teacher.

"I told him 'I'll take anything,'" Pettit said.

He had a golf background, playing at Manchester, Indiana College. That much was listed under "hobbies" on his application. And he had a friend, from his graduate-school days at the University of Arkansas, who could teach him enough

(continued on page 32)

Maintaining personal contact with his athletes is an integral part of Pettit's coaching philosophy. Left, Terry speaks to one of his players before departing for a recent summer tournament. Right, "If you had asked me seven years ago would I be coaching at Nebraska, it would have been like asking me if I would be flying a rocket to the moon," says Pettit. Ted Kirk photos











Whether writing an itinerary for a road trip or typing a final draft of a poem, Terry Pettit devotes many hours to coaching and writing alike.

Ted Kirk photo

(continued from page 30)

tennis in one summer to get by. So he accepted and became "Coach Pettit." It was easy.

Nebraska's successful women's volleyball coach has always picked up skills quickly. That's how he completed a three-year, Master of Fine Arts, creative-writing program at Arkansas in two years.

"I either had to stay in graduate school the rest of my life or get it over with," Pettit said, so he doubled his course-load and took classes the year-around.

His fine arts degree complements a Bachelor of Science degree in English and speech completed at Manchester. But neither of those accomplishments explains how Pettit became a volleyball coach at Nebraska.

In two seasons, his Lady Huskers have won back-to-back Big Eight titles, and last winter, they qualified for the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) national tournament in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. During the off-season, Pettit coached the same group of girls to a spot in the national AAU volleyball tournament in Lisle, Illinois.

Nancy Grant, who came to Nebraska from Lincoln East High School, will be a

senior next season. She was the only unanimous All-Big Eight volleyball selection last season, and on the strength of her performance at the AIAW nationals, Grant was invited to try out for the U.S. World University Games team.

Her success is Pettit's success. He has chosen her to be the Lady Huskers' team captain next winter.

But it hasn't always been that way. Grant already had established herself as an All-Big Eight performer before Pettit arrived, but during Pettit's first season at NU, Nancy had problems adjusting and she wasn't a repeat all-conference selection.

Pettit made her realize she wasn't being serious about volleyball.

"At first, I didn't like him telling me I had to change my attitude. It wasn't easy, and I think we all resented it," Grant said.

In one season the resentment turned to respect. When Terry attended a high school athletic awards banquet last May, Nancy Grant was the baby-sitter for the Pettit's 1½-year old daughter, Katherine. Katherine and Nancy share a Nov. 28 birth date.

"I've come a long way, but if I'd have had him (Pettit) pushing me as a freshman, I don't know how much farther along I'd be," Nancy said.

Pettit molds his players' attitudes in the same way he shapes his poetry. The personal contact, the mingling of character, is as important to him as a solid spike or a quick dig off the court.

"I'm almost totally directed to the relationship with my athletes. Are we dealing with things or covering them up? Are we growing at all? We might spend as much time in those areas as the others by choice," he said.

But such an approach is not without its burdens on the coach as well as his athletes. Pettit has learned why most coaches maintain a professional distance between themselves and their players. The constant personal contact, if it's sincere, can be a wearing experience.

Even so, that's a long way from Louisburg College and boys' golf and tennis, not to mention the creative writing and poetry. "I still see myself as a teacher," Pettit said.

Pettit saw himself that way when he coached his first volleyball team. The U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare put pressure on Louisburg College to institute some women's athletic programs. The school's athletic director asked Terry and his wife, Barb, if they would coach a team.

"I was pretty chauvenistic then, and I



thought he meant a men's volleyball team," Pettit said of his acceptance. "When I found out it was a women's team, I thought 'Oh great.' I had played volleyball with women before but never coached them.

That was one better than the athletes who showed up to try out for his newly-formed team. None of them had played volleyball before. They didn't know a set from a spike. "It was an evangelistic task almost. First, it was hard to get them out, and then I had to convince them it was fun," he said.

Pettit could empathize with his players because he had been a "mediocre athlete" as a 5-foot-6, high school student. "I was always interested in athletics even though some years I'd deny it and say, 'Hey, I'm no jock.'"

His serious interest in volleyball didn't begin until 1971, and then it was by chance. Pettit was playing in a gymnasium one day at George Williams College in Downers Grove, Illinois, when "a guy came over and asked, 'Would you like to play with us?'"

The "guy" was Jim Vineyard, who had been captain of the U.S. National Men's team. Through Vineyard, Pettit became involved with a United States Volleyball Association men's team and met Jim Coleman a United States Olympic coach. It all came about by accident.

"I don't know why he (Vineyard) took an interest in me; it's beyond my fathoming," Pettit said. "I was not all that young and not all that good, but I guess sometimes older athletes feel a responsibility to promote their sport."

Pettit shared that responsibility by coaching and playing with a men's team at Arkansas while he was completing his Masters Degree in creative writing. Then he used that background to create success with the women at Louisburg.

He taught\* English and speech and quickly built a winning volleyball program there. In their second season, Louisburg's women finished 10th at the junior college national tournament in Miami, Florida. The next year, they posted a 28-5 record and finished fifth in the nation.

During that time, Pettit and his wife opened the first volleyball camp in the South. It became an immediate success, and "we were more than full," he said.

The problem was, "Coach" Terry Pettit was losing his identity as a writer-poet, something as dear to him as teaching and an activity certainly more fulfilling for him than coaching.

"The tail got to wagging the dog, and I was spurning creative writing. The thing that was the most successful was, in the beginning, the least of my priorities," he said.

Pettit decided to move. He's never been one to stick in one place for an extended

period of time, so he began a search which would lead him back to the Midwest, where he grew up after being born in California.

The first step occurred by chance. Pettit found a bulletin — in a wastebasket — describing an opening for a women's volleyball coach at Nebraska. Nebraska was midwest, certainly, and Pettit had nothing to lose.

He was one of three candidates brought in for an interview, part of which involved conducting a practice. It went well, and Pettit was offered the job. He was hesitant to accept it.

"Even when Nebraska offered it to me, I didn't have any compulsion to accept. I had some reservations about devoting so much time to this one thing," Pettit said. "Some coaches, all they need to do is coach at a major university, but there are 10 different things I want to do, and coaching is just one of those things.

"If you had asked me seven years ago would I be coaching at Nebraska, it would have been like asking me if I would be flying a rocket to the moon for NASA.

"I don't feel any allegiance to coaching

just because it's been successful or leaving something because it hasn't been," he said. "This is not something I plan to do all my life."

Pettit says journalism is a possibility some day. He reads the work of journalists like John McPhee, who wrote a biography of former NBA star and Rhodes Scholar Bill Bradley, and lets his mind wander.

McPhee incorporates the techniques of a fiction writer into his journalistic efforts, and that attracts the creative writing aspect of Pettit's character. Like so many other things, he has a background in journalism, which has been mothballed in favor of coaching volleyball.

After completing his undergraduate work at Manchester, Pettit was awarded a scholarship to Bethany Theological Seminary in Oak Brook, Illinois. He had no plans for becoming a minister, but "in the late sixties, seminaries were hotbeds of political activity," said Pettit.

His interest in peaceful resistance to the Vietnam War drew him to Oak Brook. Later, he entered volunteer service as a conscientious objector for the Church of



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## WHILE CROSSING A FIELD IN NORTHERN INDIANA

First  
he thought he had been stung  
by a wasp  
but when his body  
began to collapse  
he knew that somewhere  
beyond a stand of sycamore  
a man was watching him  
across a spider's silk thread  
in gunsight,  
and when his hand  
touched the ground  
he thought of a small town  
in Kansas  
sunlight coming into  
his bedroom  
like a sudden rush of blood  
into the brain  
his heartbeat  
my god  
his heartbeat.

copyright Terry Pettit



Lori Melcher (on floor) digs the ball up to Kim Hermes and Ann Haberman (far right) in game action last season. In two seasons the NU team has won back-to-back Big Eight titles. Mike Hlevyack photo

the Brethren.

"I was cheap and available," Pettit said. He was assigned to the church's national headquarters in Elgin, Illinois, where he became a writer-reporter, covering stories of interest to the Church. He was given room and board, 15 dollars a month, and a credit card which took him to wherever a story could be found.

Pettit found stories at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. He covered peace marches in Washington, D.C. And he helped a group of the Brethren resurrect houses destroyed by Hurricane Camille. Protestors and artists inhabited his work.

"I traveled light. I had no material possessions, and it was easy to move in and out of groups," Pettit said. He was a part of the stories he covered; he was involved, and his poetry reflects his involvement.

Pettit's work was published by the Church of the Brethren in a collection of four young poets, but now he says he's more interested in journalism.

"There's magic in journalism, but there's also a great deal of craft. To be a successful poet, you've got to be creatively crazier. It's not always a matter of will," he said.

Coaching doesn't provide him with the same fulfillment that writing does. Terry Pettit can find a release for his self-express-

sion in competition, which is an experience similar to the writing process he says.

Coaches must remain dispassionate. Coaching is rational, but writing and competing often transcend the rational. They can be accomplished by instinct and emotion.

"There's a difference between coaching and playing, but there are many similarities between competing and writing. Sometimes you go out on the court, and something happens: you play better than you really are. Whether it's timing or whatever, you're not even trying. It just happens," Pettit said.

"There's nothing quite like it except in writing. You fumble with something, and pretty soon, the pen is moving by itself and you're not in control. Something happens that you never thought would happen when you went in.

"At times, I'm envious of my athletes. I wish I could physically share the exhaustion, the joy of going through a practice," he said. "But most of all, I miss the opportunity to be in a game and have those rare moments when you transcend your own abilities. To me it's almost a religious experience, and I'm not sure either one is possible in the same way when you're a coach."

To illustrate his point, Pettit recalled a

poem he once wrote on the day before a final exam. He stayed up all night, writing nine drafts of the poem. The work cornered his awareness, and he lost track of time. "The next thing I knew, friends were waking me up," he said.

Terry Pettit has spent a summer in the mountains of New Mexico, organizing poetry readings. He has worked as a counselor at a wilderness camp in Ohio, taught English, speech, and creative writing in college, and written poetry which has been published.

He has traveled across the United States covering and participating in events that have helped shape this decade in America's history. And he's been a successful volleyball coach.

Pettit chooses not to order those things according to their relative importance because they are all just steps along a road he has chosen. His journey didn't begin when he drove up and down the East Coast looking for a teaching job, and it won't end with a successful coaching tenure at Nebraska.

As Robert Frost's speaker said in *Stopping By Woods On a Snowy Evening*: "The woods are lovely, dark and deep. But I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep . . . and miles to go before I sleep." ★





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# HUSKER SCORECARD

by Ryly Jane Hambleton

**BASEBALL** — The Nebraska baseball team closed the season with a 49-15 record against U.S. collegiate teams and 50-16 overall, splitting with Tokai-Japan in Hawaii. The Huskers were 14-6 in the Big Eight.

NU opened the Big Eight baseball championships with a 7-6 loss to Oklahoma, but came back through the losers' bracket with a 7-6 win over Oklahoma State in 10 innings and a 22-6 drubbing of Missouri. The Huskers faced the Sooners again in the finals but fell to OU, 9-7. OU advanced to regional play against the likes of Arizona and Hawaii.

NU was invited to play in the Northeast Regional with an opener against St. John's, a College World Series participant last year. After a two-day rain delay, St. John's toppled NU 5-0, but the Huskers came back the same day to eliminate Navy, 13-4. The following day, Connecticut put NU out of the running with a 15-0 victory. Connecticut then defeated St. John's twice to earn the Northeast Region College World Series berth.

The NU team will lose five men to graduation this year. They include second baseman and co-captain John Russo, catcher and co-captain Val Primante, designated hitter Bob Gebler, and pitchers Jeff Costello and Tim Pettit.

Russo compiled a two-year batting average of .284 after transferring from Meramec Junior College. He tied the school mark for stolen bases in a season with 25 this year.

Primante also had a two-year average of .284. Hitting .304 in his final season, the Mt. San Antonio Junior College transfer drew 65 walks this season.

Costello, a four-year letterman from Omaha, had a career record of 17-10 and was 5-0 his final year with a 2.49 ERA. His career ERA of 3.70 resulted from 47 appearances in four years.

Pettit, a righthanded transfer from El Camino Junior College, had a two-year record of 12-8 with a 4.29 ERA. He had wins this year over USC, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State and was named first-team academic All-Big Eight with a 2.9 average in business.

Gebler, a three-year letterman, hit .317 this year and holds the season record for most hits, 70, and most triples, 7. He also holds career marks for most doubles, 21, and most triples, 14. Gebler was honorable mention All-Big Eight and first team DH at the Big Eight baseball tournament. He has a four-year batting average of .301.

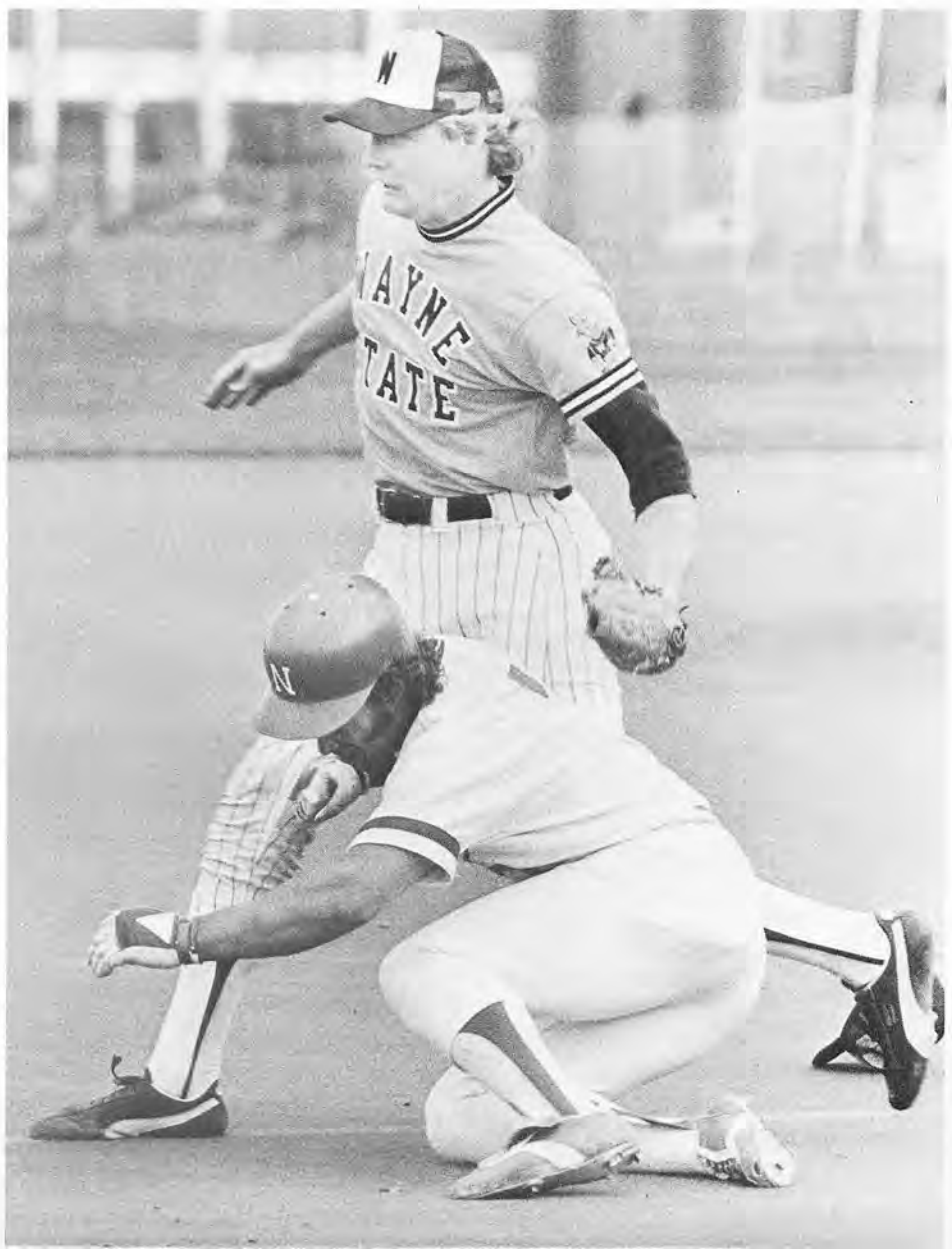
**TRACK** — Nebraska sent seven individuals to the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships in Champaign, Illinois after finishing fourth in the Big Eight meet.

Mark Fluitt was the Huskers' only Big Eight champion. He took the 1,500 meter gold medal with the time of 3:45.33, which was both a conference meet and Ed Weir

Stadium record. Teammate Brian Dunningan finished third in the event.

NU also gathered three silver medals. Lee Kunz was second in the discus at 175-5, being ousted as Big Eight champion by Scott Harrell of Missouri. Doug Phelps, the 1978 indoor and outdoor high jump champion, finished second with a mark of 7-1½, a new school record. The third silver medal came in the 400 meter hurdles when sophomore Everton DaCosta finished in a career best :50.7.

Junior Scott Poehling finished fourth in the 800 meters, a race in which the top four bested the old Big Eight record. Tommy McCall of Kansas won the race.



Ted Kirk photo

Husker co-captain Val Primante crashes into an unidentified Wayne State player in home action this season. For the year, Primante batted .304.



Kansas won the team title with 143 points, followed by Missouri 109.5, Kansas State 66.5, Nebraska 60, Colorado 59, Oklahoma 53.5, Iowa State 41.4 and Oklahoma State 25.

Phelps was the only Husker to qualify for the finals at the NCAA meet in Champaign, Illinois on May 31-June 2, as he cleared both 6-11 and the qualifying height of 7-0¼ on his first attempts. Phelps made the opening height of 7-0 in the finals on his third try but missed on all three attempts at 7-2¼. He placed 14th in the finals standings out of 15 competitors. (See related article page 16.)

Poehling advanced to the semifinals of the 800 with a third-place finish in his heat in a time of 1:49.25. The Fremont native's attempt fell short with a fifth-place finish in his semifinal heat in a time of 1:50.42.

Ray Mahoney false-started in his 400-meter heat and was disqualified, while DaCosta finished seventh in his qualifying heat of the 400-meter hurdles in a time of :54.04.

Two other sophomores, javelin thrower Ken Drwal and pole vaulter Randy Raymond also failed to advance from qualification rounds, as did junior Lee Kunz in the discus. Raymond failed at the opening height of 16-1 and Kunz' best effort was 178-8.

**SOFTBALL** — Nebraska split with Creighton and swept a doubleheader from UNO in preparation for the AIAW Region 6 Championships in Lawrence, Kansas. But the warmup games could not help the Huskers as they met the eventual regional champion, Kansas, in the first round and lost 9-0.

NU won its next game in the double elimination tourney against North Dakota State, 10-4, powered by the home runs of Linda McCrea, Candy Hoffman and Julie Uryasz. But then the Huskers ran into Emporia State and lost 4-2 to be ousted. Emporia State finished second in the tournament and both Kansas teams advanced to the College World Series in Omaha.

The NU team completed the season 38-20, for a record number of wins. The team batted .263 and the pitchers had an ERA of 2.37.

Leading the batting parade was Linda McCrea, who averaged .328, knocked in 42 runs, had 61 hits and hit five home runs. Candy Hoffman hit .319 and Kris Hermanson, one of three seniors on the team, was at .309. Hermanson also holds the single season mark for stolen bases (16) and the career mark in that category (26).

McCrea, who played both shortstop and pitched, was 5-1 on the mound with a 1.24 ERA, while Hoffman, who doubled as pitcher and second baseman, was 6-0 and



Cindy Vickers (above) teamed with Donna Fox, Lisa Kramer and Cindy Dixon finished 18th in the two-mile relay at the AIAW Nationals. Mark Billingsley photo

had a 1.24 ERA. Hoffman fired the only no-hitter of the season against Yavapai College in Arizona.

NU will lose three seniors: Kris Hermanson, Kathy Foley and Julie Geis. Hermanson and Foley teamed up for the past two years at left and center fields while Geis doubled as utility infielder and designated hitter.

**WOMEN'S TRACK** — NU sent five individuals and one relay team to the AIAW national track and field championships in East Lansing, Michigan.

Sharon Burrill, a freshman from Denver, finished ninth in the high jump at 5-10. The winning height was 6-3½ by Louise Ritter of Texas Women's University. Teammate Christy Lee of Scottsbluff was 19th at 5-7.

Karen Frazee, the Big Eight pentathlon champion, finished 14th in her specialty with a 3,560 total — 200 points less than her Big Eight total.

The two-mile relay team of Cindy Vickers, Donna Fox, Lisa Kramer and Cindy Dixon, finished 18th with a time of 9:31.2.

Senior Pam Koontz was 30th in the discus at 141-0 while teammate Sue Kobza was 32nd at 138-10.

Cal State Northridge won the team title, followed by Arizona State, Tennessee, Texas Women's and Morgan State. Big Eight champion Iowa State tied for 17th.

**FUTURE NU ATHLETES** — The University has signed Chris Leigh of Platteview to a basketball scholarship.

Leigh, who was named the Sunday *Journal and Star* Girls' Prep Athlete-of-the-Year, set numerous single season and career scoring records. She played on the Class B state tourney runner-up Springfield-Platteview team.

Others signed to cage scholarships include Kathy Hagerstrom, DePeire, Wisconsin; Christina Kowalski, Allenwood Park, New Jersey; Molly Shanahan, Ventura, California; LaDonna Unwin, Orange Park, Florida; and Lorrie VanHove, Steamboat Rock, Iowa.

Carol Chmelka, sister of Husker Chuck, signed a gymnastics letter of intent to keep the gymnastics family all in one school. Others named to gymnastics scholarships include Deb Harrison, Wilmington, Delaware; Susan Litrenta of York, Pennsylvania.

Janet Stanard of Aurora, Nebraska is the only golf scholarship athlete to be named.

Stacey Porter of Lincoln High garnered one of Ray Huppert's swimming scholarships. Others who will be swimming for NU include Carol Hall of Wichita, Kansas; Sherri Hayward, Columbus, Ohio; and Ann Kennedy, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Ann Swanson, the Class A singles champion from Grand Island, signed a letter of intent to play for NU next year. Two girls from Peoria, Illinois, will join her as scholarship tennis athletes. They are Mary Moore and Cindy Reiman.

Bonnie Pohlmeier of Hastings St. Cecilia, is the only athlete signed to a Husker scholarship for the volleyball team this year, as coach Terry Pettit lost just one senior.

Wanda Ashford of Homestead AFB in Florida, has signed a track letter of intent. Ashford, the younger sister of Montreal Olympic silver medalist Evelyn Ashford in the 200, has an open quarter time of :54.7 and has run the 330-yard hurdles in :41.9. Head coach Carol Frost said that would figure to be about a :58.0 400-meter hurdles time.

A verbal commitment to attend NU has also been made by two Jamaicans. Norma Lee Murray is the junior national team captain and has a quarter mile time of :54.0. Marilyn Otley is the national junior champion in both the 100 and 200 meters. ★



# 1979 FINAL SPRING SPORTS RESULTS

## TENNIS

### MEN

4-5 Cal State-Bakersfield  
 4-5 Los Angeles-Pierce College  
 3-6 Air Force  
 5-4 Iowa State  
 1-8 Oklahoma State  
 2-7 Colorado  
 0-9 Oklahoma State  
 5-4 Missouri  
 7-2 Baker  
 9-0 Washburn  
 8-1 McPherson  
 7-2 Bethany  
 6-2 Drake  
 6-3 Iowa State  
 1-8 Minnesota  
 6-3 Illinois St.  
 4-5 Kansas St.  
 Big 8 Tournament — 5th, 29 points

### WOMEN

3-6 Oklahoma State  
 2-7 Oral Roberts  
 1-8 Oklahoma  
 8-1 Kansas State  
 1-8 Drake  
 9-0 Northwest Missouri State  
 Missouri Valley Championships — 7th  
 Minnesota Invitational — 3rd (tie)  
 Big 8 Tournament —

## BASEBALL

1-9 Cal Poly-Pomona  
 15-1 Buena Vista  
 12-8 Buena Vista  
 9-0 South Dakota  
 6-0 South Dakota  
 13-3 Western Missouri  
 3-1 Western Missouri  
 9-1 Western Missouri  
 9-6 Western Missouri  
 5-1 Western Missouri  
 10-8 Creighton  
 15-5 Creighton  
 9-5 Western Missouri  
 5-4 Nebraska-Omaha  
 0-1 Nebraska-Omaha  
 7-4 Colorado  
 5-1 Colorado  
 3-2 Kansas State  
 1-0 Kansas State  
 2-7 Oklahoma State  
 8-6 Oklahoma State  
 3-0 Iowa State  
 9-1 Iowa State  
 3-0 Iowa State  
 10-1 Iowa State

7-1 Dana  
 10-1 Dana  
 7-2 Morningside  
 12-0 Morningside  
 7-5 Missouri  
 5-10 Missouri  
 0-13 Missouri  
 4-6 Missouri  
 4-2 UNO  
 20-5 UNO  
 1-3 Kansas  
 2-3 Kansas  
 4-1 Kansas  
 3-2 Kansas  
 2-1 UNO  
 9-8 UNO  
 Big 8 Tournament; 2nd place —  
 6-7 Oklahoma  
 7-6 Oklahoma St.  
 22-6 Missouri  
 7-9 Oklahoma  
 Northeast Regional; 3rd place —  
 0-5 St. Johns  
 13-4 Navy  
 0-15 Connecticut

## TRACK

### MEN

Northeast Louisiana Invitational — 1st  
 7-87 Arizona State  
 77-77 Iowa State  
 El Paso Invitational — 6th  
 Drake Relays — no score kept  
 68-86 Missouri  
 Big 8 — 4th, 60 points

### WOMEN

Husker Invitational — 2nd  
 Illinois Invitational — 3rd  
 Northern Colorado Invitational — 1st  
 State meet at Wayne St. — did not attend  
 Drake Relays — no score kept  
 Big 8 Championships — 7th; 48 points

## GOLF

### MEN

#### Results to date:

Gulfstream Invitational — 2nd  
 Morris Williams Invitational — 18th  
 Wheatshocker Invite — 2nd  
 Drake Relays — 1st  
 Big 8 Championships — 3rd (tie)

### WOMEN

Wichita State Invitational — 1st  
 Big 8 Tournament — 4th  
 Minnesota Invitational — 5th

## SOFTBALL

Nebraska 7, 13; Central Arizona 3, 5  
 Nebraska 2, 12; Phoenix College 1, 1  
 Arizona State 6, 2; Nebraska 3, 1  
 Nebraska 9, 9; Yavapai College 0, 2  
 Ohio State 2, Nebraska 1  
 Nebraska 15, Baylor 3  
 Oklahoma 6, Nebraska 1  
 Nebraska 11, Mankato State 3  
 Nebraska 3, 8; Northwest Missouri 0, 1  
 Nebraska 1, 6; Northwest Missouri 0, 4  
 Nebraska 2, 9; Wayne State 1, 3  
 Nebraska 2, 4; Drake 1, 1  
 Big 8 Tournament: 0-2 Missouri;  
 0-3 Oklahoma St.

Nebraska 1, 6; Northwest Missouri 0, 4  
 Nebraska 2, 9; Wayne State 1, 3  
 Kansas 3, 1; Nebraska 1, 12  
 Kansas St. Tournament — 1st  
 Nebraska 7, 8; Kansas State 6, 2  
 Nebraska 2, 4; UNO 1, 0  
 Creighton — PPD  
 State Tournament — 1st  
 Drake — did not attend  
 Region 6 Tourney: 0-9 Kansas; 10-4 N. Dakota  
 State; 2-4 Emporia State



# tasty terry!

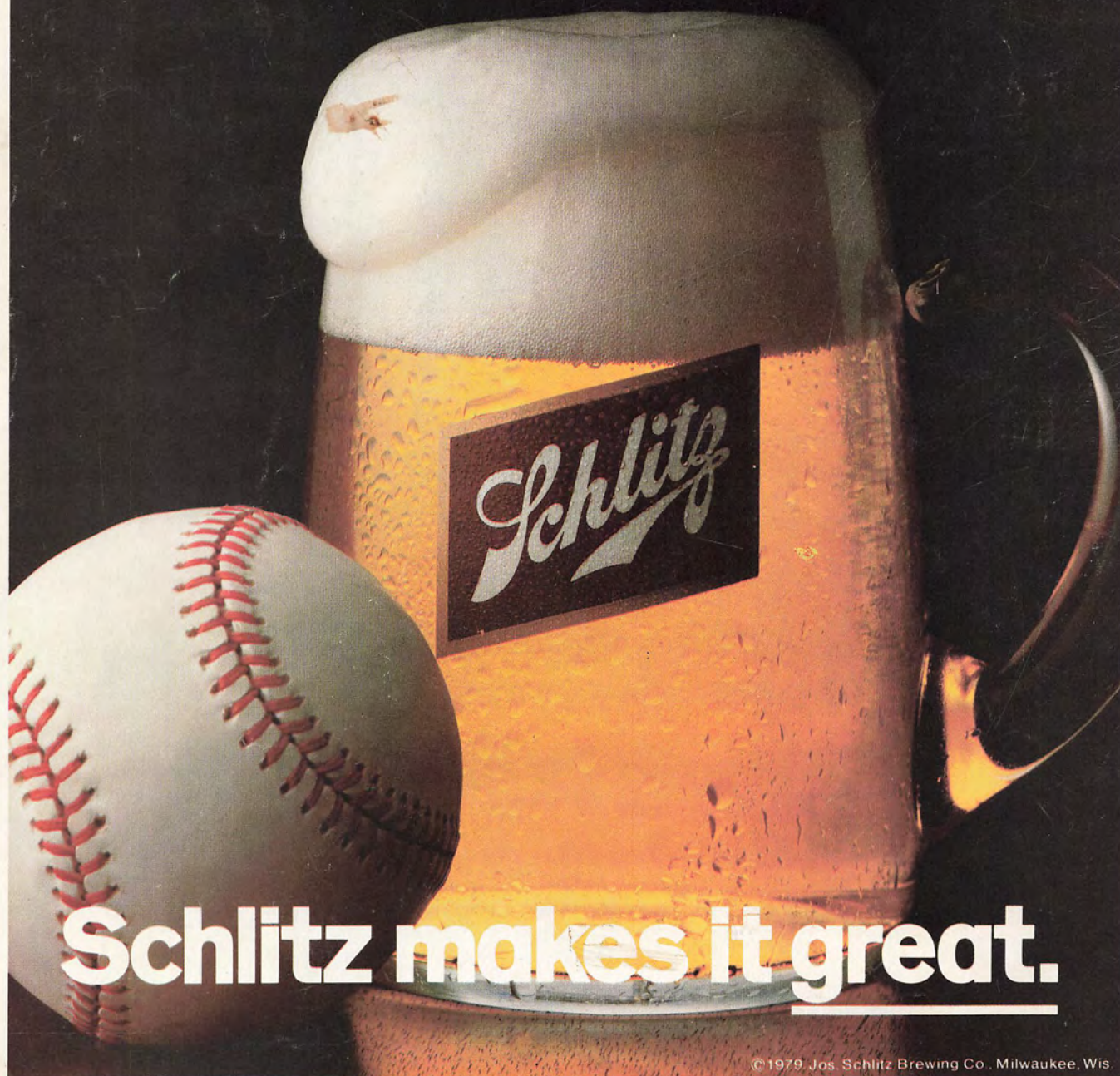
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